DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 248 717 FL 014 573

AUTHOR Smith, Nancy E.
TITLE Teaching Job-Related English as a Second Language.
INSTITUTION Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Aug 84
NOTE 10p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; *Bilingual Education; Employment Potential; Federal Government; Federal Legislation; Limited English Speaking; Program Development; *Program Implementation; Resource Materials; Second Language Instruction; State Government; Testing; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS *Vocational English as a Second Language

ABSTRACT

One program model for limited English proficient (LEP) adults incorporating job-related English as an important component is bilingual vocational education, authorized by the federal Vocational Education Act. Its objective is to make LEP adults more employable by teaching them both English and job skills. Such a project uses a team of two teachers, a vocational and a language instructor. A major advantage of this model is that students do not have to wait to learn English in order to learn job skills. Experience has shown that the employment rate of participants is higher than average, and that participants' earnings tend to keep pace with inflation. Many techniques and resources designed for these programs can also be adapted for other adult education and LEP program use. Available program planning and implementation materials cover such topics as (1) components to be considered in planning, administering, and evaluating programs; (2) overcoming obstacles to full trainee participation; (3) language teaching techniques specifically for job-related English, (4) identifying occupations in which foreign language skills are an asset, (5) vocational oral proficiency testing, and (6) strategies for using external program resources. Titles, sources, and names of contacts for obtaining these materials are provided. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ON ADULT LEARNING

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF ADULT EDUCATION SERVICES
OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL & ADULT EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202 - 3585

ED248717

TEACHING JOB-RELATED ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

FL014573

Prepared by

Nancy E. Smith

Education Program Specialist

August 1984

Limited English proficient adults represent a special population group served by the federally-funded, State-administered Adult Education Act (P.L. 91-320, as amended). Usually, State and local education agencies offer English as a second language (ESL) classes to limited English-speakers as part of the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program. Changes in the approach to ESL instruction in the last decade have deemphasized academic ESL and focused instead on the provision of job-related English as a second language. This change reflects the nature of adult learners who demand appropriate instruction reflecting their personal needs, including employment and self-sufficiency.

One program model which successfully incorporates job-related English as an important component is bilingual vocational education authorized by the Vocational Education Act (P.L. 94-482, as amended). The major goal of bilingual vocational training programs is to make limited English-speaking adults more employable by teaching them to speak English and perform a job skill. A bilingual vocational training project has two bilingual instructors who work as a team, one to teach the occupational skill, the other to teach English. The vocational instructor uses both languages to teach the skills needed for the occupation. The ESL instructor attends the vocational classes to observe what specific language the participants need to learn and then focuses the job-related English lessons on the vocabulary (such as safety language) that the trainees will use on the job.

Because English is not the only language of instruction used in a bilingual vocational training program, adult participants do not have to wait until they know the English language to learn a skill or trade. Instructors provide instruction in English or in the trainees' own language whenever a basic concept is not understood in English. Participants can use their own first language as a medium of instruction while learning English as a second language. They also benefit immediately from the vocational component of the program because they understand the language of instruction, and can be understood by the instructor. Instructional materials are appropriate for limited English proficient adults. This ideal model of providing bilingual vocational skills training concurrently with job-specific ESL prepares limited English-speaking learners for employment in the same amount of time as their English-speaking peers complete traditional monolingual vocational training.

Bilingual vocational training is a pragmatic approach to adult education because it makes the trainees employable. The employment rate of participants rises dramatically in comparison to both the national average and the average rate for the local labor areas served by the bilingual vocational training program. Another indicator of the program's effectiveness is that the trainees' weekly job earnings tend to keep pace with inflation.

Participants who complete bilingual vocational training are less dependent on social welfare programs than other limited English proficient adults. Program completers have a lower incidence of poverty than adults who do not participate. Participants quickly become self-supporting workers who pay federal income taxes within several years of program completion equal to the government's investment in their training. Self-sufficiency is the result of participating in bilingual vocational training.

Both the Adult Education Act and the Vocational Education Act serve the same population: persons with limited English proficiency who are either unemployed or underemployed because their poor English prevents them from performing adequately in an environment requiring English language skills. Congress authorized legislation for bilingual vocational training under the Vocational Education Act (P.L. 94-482), as amended by the Education Amendments of 1974. Expanded authorization under the Education Amendments of 1976 provided legislation alloting twenty-five percent of the appropriated funds for training bilingual vocational instructors, and allocating ten percent of the funds for developing bilingual vocational materials, methods, and techniques. Adult Basic Education program administrators and teachers who work with limited English proficient adults can adapt practices and information from ESL program practices and strategies funded under the bilingual vocational training legislation. Research and development products designed specifically to serve the bilingual vocational training project participants are useful for teaching limited English proficient adults. The practices and strategies discussed in these products can enhance services offered by the State-administered Adult Basic Education program.

Rudolph Troike's monograph called Assessing Successful Strategies in Bilingual Vocational Training Programs describes six components to be considered when planning an adult ESL program(Rosslyn, Virginia: InterAmerica Research Associates, 1981, page 3). 1). Program planners should assess the need for educational services. For instance, will the ABE-ESL program offer classes in a neighborhood easily accessible to limited English proficient adults?
2). Planners should set measurable program and instructional objectives. Staff members need to know the goals they are expected to accomplish.
3). Planners should establish effective and objective methods for measuring success. For instance, will the ABE-ESL program use a participant's improved English proficiency as a measure of success? Will the program use pre- and post-tests to measure a learner's gains in language proficiency? 4). Planners should ensure that adequate time, facilities, and equipment are available to the program to meet the established objectives. For instance, because second language learning takes time, ESL classes should meet frequently enough to reinforce an adult's language acquisition. Adult education classes should be scheduled to accommodate the participant's other responsibilities such as jobs and child care. Facilities should be comfortable; because many ABE-ESL classes meet in converted or surplus elementary schools, program planners should requisition adult-size furniture. Planners should also acquire equipment in

working condition to supplement classroom instruction. 5). Planners should ensure adequate funding so that ESL instructors can be hired for an entire year. Continuity affects the success of a program because if staff morale is low, the program's objectives may not be met. 6). Program planners should hire well-trained staff members and provide pre- or in-service training to enhance their skills. For instance, teachers trained to provide academic ESL instruction need information about teaching job-related English as a second language. ABE-ESL program planners should consider these six components when structuring an adult basic education program for limited English-speakers.

One of the earliest products funded under the bilingual vocational training funds was Development Associates' Monograph for Bilingual Vocational Training Projects (Arlington, Virginia: 1979). ESL staff members may use the monograph for guidance in organizing, managing, and evaluating adult education programs.

A more recent product developed by L. Miranda and Associates, Overcoming Obstacles to Full Participation of Trainees in Bilingual Vocational Training Programs has implications for educators working with limited English proficient adults because the obstacles for participants entering either ABE-ESL or bilingual vocational training are similar (Bethesda, Maryland: 1983). The obstacles to education for adults may be of a financial, instructional, or cultural nature. The project report identifies fifteen obstacles which prevent an individual either from enrolling in or completing an ABE-ESL class. These obstacles are: health and substance abuse problems, family emergencies, pregnancy, unawareness or unavailability of transportation, child care and housing or the inability to afford transportation, child care and housing, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, inability to adapt to the classroom environment, lack of knowledge of, or resistant to appropriate behavior, inter-group conflicts, unfamiliarity with school, training, or work environment, reluctance to speak in class, misperceptions of training, unrealistic expectations, and lack of interest or motivation.

Eight other major obstacles to participation are programmatic: inappropriate or inconvenient location and scheduling, unfamiliarity of staff members with appropriate service providers, inadequate screening, placement and progress assessment of trainees, inadequate orientation, inadequate counseling, unfamiliarity of staff members with trainees' cultures, language and educational backgrounds, staff members not empathetic or committed to helping trainees, and inadequate staff development to meet the trainees' need. This research study is a valuable resource for ABE-ESL program planners because it documents what methods and procedures adult educators have used successfully to identify, prevent or resolve obstacles to limited English proficient adults' participation in ESL classes.

Kirschner Associates' publication, A Monograph for Bilingual Vocational Instructor Competencies, lists the minimum competencies needed by instructors who teach job-related English as a second language (Washington, D. C.: 1981).

Because teaching job-related English is a departure from traditional academic ESL instruction, few standards for judging the quality of instruction exist. This monograph provides such standards. The four general competency categories are: 1) plan for instruction, 2) use instructional materials and equipment, 3) provide instruction, and 4) measure learner progress (page 80). Eleven specific competencies and explanatory statements are included in the monograph and may be used for adult ESL staff development activities. The information in this monograph is particularly useful to ESL programs because it provides guidelines for hiring staff members and providing in-service training.

Ross MacDonald and his associates have written a handbook called Improving Techniques in Teaching English for the Job which suggests methods for ESL teachers to use in incorporating job-related English in their classes (Rosslyn, Virginia: InterAmerica Research Associates, 1982). The handbook's premise is that an instructional program's design should focus on functional language teaching because adults learn a second language more readily when it is related to content, rather than as an end in itself. The handbook describes how a computer can be used in analyzing job-related or technical text material as a basis for developing language instruction for limited English proficient adult learners. The presentation is not technical and no prior familiarity with computers is assumed by the authors. The handbook may be used by adult educators to incorporate characteristics of the functional approach to teaching English as a second language.

Another product available to adult ESL teachers which could influence their instructional program design is Identification of Occupations in Which a Foreign Language is an Asset written by Richard Clelland and his colleagues (Bethesda, Maryland: L. Miranda and Associates, 1982). The fifteen non-professional occupations identified are: banking, communications, construction and building maintenance, food service, health care, hotel, nursing, office, protective services and corrections, recreation, rehabilitation and therapy, retail and wholesale trade, social service, transportation, travel and tourism occupations.

The ability to speak a language other than English can be an asset in three instances: 1) in obtaining jobs where an employee deals frequently with non-English speakers, 2) in professional advancement, and 3) in receiving salary benefits. When ESL teachers plan their classes, bilingual vocational training opportunities are not usually available to the adult learners. As a result, adult educators may offer vocational English as a second language (VESL) classes focusing on the vocabulary and grammar used in occupational settings. ESL teachers frequently serve as counselors to their adult students, helping them find adequate housing, enrolling their children in school, providing health care for their families, and finding jobs. This monograph provides ESL program planners with information about occupations in which their class participants are most likely to find employment.

In an adult English as a second language program, one measure of success is the participants' attainment of English. Resource Development Institute designed the Bilingual Vocational Oral Proficiency Test which is suitable for use with limited English proficient adults entering ABE-ESL classes (Austin, Texas: 1980). This criterion referenced instrument was field tested with adults from several language groups and is a valid measure of English at low and mid levels of proficiency. The test has two forms which make it useful for ABE-ESL program administrators and teachers to use in assessing very low level English-speakers' proficiency. The two forms assess an adult's speaking and listening skills; the first form measures a participant's level of English proficiency upon entering a program, the second form determines what gains a participant has made while enrolled.

Kirschner Associates conducted another study entitled Strategies for Using External Resources in Bilingual Vocational Training Programs: A Guide for Program Planning and Operation (Washington, D. C.: 1983). The guide describes how adult education programs can provide instruction and services more effectively by using resources from businesses, industries, educational institutions, public and private agencies, community based organizations, and individual volunteers. External resources typically include the expertise and experience of staff, facilities, furnishings, up-to-date equipment, instructional materials, supplies, transportation, communications, and supportive or human services. These resources may augment many aspects of program operations, including recruitment, language proficiency assessment, curriculum review and development, instruction, and counseling. Other support services for adult learners include stipends, tuition grants or waivers, child care, referrals for physical, dental, or mental health care, housing assistance, nutrition education, and translator or interpreter services. This guide provides detailed recommendations for identifying, obtaining and using external resources and community linkages to augment educational programs.

Many parallels exist between program designs for bilingual vocational training and Adult Basic Education-English as a second language (ABE-ESL) classes because the adult learners in both cases are of limited English proficiency and their educational needs or goals are similar. The overall purpose of adult education is to enable the participants to function better in society. For most adults, second language learning should be based on their communication and life coping skills needed on the job and outside of the classroom.

The eight products developed for the federally-funded bilingual vocational training program are valuable resources for use by educators who work with limited English proficient adults in ABE-ESL programs. The job-related English as a second language program strategies and practices described in these products are useful to ESL teachers because the products have been field tested with limited English proficient adults and have been proven to work. Familiarity with these successful strategies and practices can enhance adult basic education and ESL classes for adults of limited English proficiency if adult educators will adapt them.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Clelland, Richard W. et al. Identification of Occupations in Which a Foreign Language is an Asset. Bethesda, Maryland: L. Miranda and Associates, 1982 (Draft).

Available from:

National Center for Research in Vocational Education
ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career and Vocational Education
Ohio State University
1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210
Telephone: (614) 486-3655
(800) 848-4815

Development Associates. A Monograph for Bilingual Vocational Training Projects. Arlington, Virginia: 1979.

Available from:

Development Associates, Inc.
(Publications)
2924 Columbia Pike
Arlington, Virginia 22204
Telephone: (703) 979-0100

Kirschner Associates. A Monograph for Bilingual Vocational Instructor Competencies. Washington, D. C.: 1981.

Available from:

Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center
California State University, Los Angeles
5151 State University Drive
Los Angeles, California 90032
Attention: Dr. Charles Leyba
Telephone: (213) 224-3676

L. Miranda and Associates. Overcoming Obstacles to Full Participation of Trainees in Bilingual Vocational Training Programs. Bethesda, Maryland: 1983.

Available from:

Miranda Associates, Inc.
4340 East-West Highway, Suite 906
Bethesda, Maryland 20814
Telephone: (301) 656-2208

MacDonald, Ross et al. Improving Techniques in Teaching English for the Job: A Handbook. Rosslyn, Virginia: InterAmerica Research Associates, 1982.

Available from:

National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education
1555 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 605
Rosslyn, Virginia 22209
Attention: Ms. Harpreet Sandhu
Telephone: (703) 522-0870
(800) 336-4560

Peterson, Morris et al. Strategies for Using External Resources in Bilingual Vocational Training Programs: A Guide for Program Planning and Operation. Washington, D. C.: Kirschner Associates, 1983 (Draft).

Available from:

Evaluation, Dissemination, and Assessment Center
California State University
5151 State University Drive
Los Angeles, California 90032
Attention: Dr. Charles Leyba
Telephone: (213) 224-3676

Resource Development Institute. Bilingual Vocational Oral Proficiency Test. Austin, Texas: 1980.

Available from:

Melton Peninsula Inc.
111 Leslie Street
Dallas, Texas 75207
Attention: Mr. Ken Kruse
Telephone: (214) 651-1703
(800) 527-7830

Troike, Rudolph C. et al. Assessing Successful Strategies in Bilingual Vocational Training Programs. Rosslyn, Virginia: InterAmerica Research Associates, 1981.

Available from:

National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education
1555 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 605
Rosslyn, Virginia 22209
Attention: Ms. Harpreet Sandhu
Telephone - Publications (703) 522-0710

Toll Free (800) 336-4560